

GRAND RAPIDS (Mich.)

PRESS MARCH 18, 1954

Circ.: e. 108,835

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MAR 18 1954  
Date:

## Giving Away Too Much?

Allen W. Dulles, chief of the United States' intelligence services, believes that this country tells Russia too much in press dispatches and scientific publications, which probably is true. Certainly an intelligent reader, whether Russian or American, could gain a comprehensive knowledge of our defense preparations, the type, number and location of such things as planes and ships, and our progress in developing new weapons merely from reading the public prints.

This information is published primarily for Americans. Letting the people know what their government is doing is an essential feature of the democratic system. The policy of the American government almost always has been to let the public know just as much as it can without betraying vital secrets.

Undoubtedly in pursuing this policy some government officials tell too much, either because they don't know exactly where to stop or because they have personal or political motives for building up some piece of news. Serious dangers lurk in such practices. But from the standpoint of democracy and good government, the dangers inherent in a policy which kept all or most information from the people would be equally serious, if not more so. For we discovered when war bans on federal information were in force that the tendency was to hold back anything that might put an official or an office in a bad light. Complete government censorship permits the incompetent and unscrupulous to get away with almost anything.

So long as we have a policy of free information with respect to federal operations we doubtless will run some risk of betraying crucial information to an enemy. That is one of the risks we must take if we are to preserve the democratic system, although this obviously is not to say that government officials themselves should not exercise the utmost care in determining how much military information should be released.

What evidently irks Allen Dulles most is the fact that Communists are able to obtain important information on our activities with little or no effort, but when it comes to getting similar information on the Reds' activities his agents have to work hard and dangerously for it. We are certain, however, that he would not advocate a degree of secrecy to match the Russians' nor wish the United States government to withhold from the American people any scrap of information that can be made public with safety.

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WASHINGTON 1, D. C.